

SPEAKER NICHOL: Senator Vard Johnson, we'll take up your motion next.

CLERK: Mr. President, Senator Vard Johnson would move to rerefer LB 662 to the Revenue Committee.

SPEAKER NICHOL: Senator Vard Johnson.

SENATOR V. JOHNSON: Mr. Speaker, members of the body, it's my intention to withdraw to this motion to rerefer. Before I formally withdraw the motion I do want to make a couple of remarks. Senator Warner closed the last motion by stating that so far as he was concerned education was always primary to taxation, and if the day was to come when taxation in terms of education was more important, then that would not be a good day for education. I want to respond to that point. Education is always primary in my mind, but when we come to a point where the tax structure that we have for the financing of education acutely affects and impacts the quality of education that we have, popular support for the financing of education, we have to change the tax system. Because if we fail to change the tax system, we do a real disservice to our youngsters, their teachers and the schools in which our youngsters and our teachers live and exist. There comes a time in the balance wheel when taxation is on the ascendancy, not for taxation per se, but to enhance education. And so what is being done with the school organization bills, they are not being seen as bills that talk about the quality of education, that talk about the value of the country school, the lack of value of the country school, they are simply bills that say it's time for us to carefully examine the kind of tax base that we have for the financing of schools in our state so that all of us can be assured for the next 20 to 30 years that we will have a financing structure which will be popular, which will provide adequate support for the education of our children, which will be strong, which will be fair. And so at this time taxation is on the ascendancy in terms of looking at education because taxation is obviously the gasoline that fuels that great engine of education and it is time that we change the octane so that we've got a high-powered system of education. And as I said initially, I thought LB 662 in particular should go to the Revenue Committee because school organization as seen in that bill is truly a tax issue. I am prepared to defer to the wishes of our body by having the combined Executive Board-Education Committee hear the issue